

## **Historic, Archive Document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



a 521  
A89F3

5207

# Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2444

Jan. 19, 1989

FARM ANIMALS OF THE FUTURE -- Broilers blooming to market size 40 percent quicker, miniature hens cranking out eggs in double time, a computer "cookbook" of recipes to custom-design creatures -- this could well be the face of animal production in the 21st century, says USDA Physiologist Robert J. Wall. At least some of the keys to these sorts of scientific miracles are already in the hands of researchers, Wall says. "Simply put, there are only five letters in the genetic alphabet, and four occur in DNA," Wall says. Contact: Robert J. Wall (301) 344-2362.

SAVING STREET TREES -- Trees not only make our neighborhoods and towns look better; they raise property values and lower utility bills. Choosing the right tree is a complex task -- a good or a bad choice will affect the appearance, health & cost of maintaining the tree for a long time. To make the task easier, Penn State has just published "Street Tree Factsheets" which provide characteristics and color photographs of 122 different trees, all well-suited to the northern U.S. and Canada. Contact: Eston C. Martz (814) 863-3587.

AG POLICY DIRECTIONS -- The National Commission on Agriculture and Rural Development Policy, established by the Food Security Act of 1985, has recommended a broad spectrum of reforms to advance ag competitiveness. The commission recommended: economic coordination; multilateral trade negotiations; domestic farm programs; marketing & market development; ag research; and resource conservation & environmental quality. "The competitiveness of U.S. agriculture is the result of teamwork encompassing a variety of public and private activities," commission members said. Copies of the commission's recommendations to President George Bush & Members of Congress, contained in "Future Directions in Agricultural Policy," are available from: Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445. Media only, please.

HOT TOPIC -- In Las Cruces, N.M., on Feb. 8, a New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology expert will reveal chile's addictive properties during the 1990 Chile Conference. Other topics on the agenda include machine harvesting, chile seed certification and how new U.S. immigration laws affect harvesting. Contact: Javier Vargas (505) 525-6649.

DIET PROMISES -- You should carefully examine diets that promise quick & easy weight loss, says Rick Lewis, a nutrition specialist with the University of Georgia. "I can see how people can be swayed by the ads, but they need to go a little further and look into them," Lewis says. A diet should allow for an average weight loss of no more than two pounds per week; should be well-balanced; and should be one that you can live with for the rest of your life, he says. Lewis has some questions to help you evaluate a diet. Contact: Susan Hammack (912) 386-3203.

"DOWN UNDER" GRASS -- A pasture grass from New Zealand has surprised USDA scientists with its drought resistance & longer growing season. Matua, a prairie brome grass, was brought to the U.S. in 1986 for tests as a coolseason grass for grazing or hay. However, the 1988 drought gave Matua another test. And, Matua thrived compared to other cool-season grasses, says USDA Agronomist Gerald A. Jung. Jung says they'll test the grass about five more years to see if Matua can make the grade for U.S. farmers. Contact: Gerald A. Jung (814) 863-0948.

BASIC MECHANISMS OF FARM POLICY -- If you have trouble calculating deficiency payments or don't understand all the terms used in farm policy, have we got a deal for you. USDA's Economic Research Service has a set of three booklets, "The Basic Mechanisms of U.S. Farm Policy," which are designed to help everyone understand farm policy. The booklets are meant to work in the same general way as an informal briefing. For a set of the three booklets, call Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445). Media only, please.

BEES GET CLOSER -- Scientists tracking the progress in Mexico of the aggressive Africanized honey bees, now expect them to arrive in the Brownsville, Texas, area between February and May 1990. At the latest, they report, the bees should arrive in the Rio Grande Valley by August or September. "These bees are not going to hunt people down and kill them," says John Thomas, a Texas Ag Extension Service entomologist. Only one person a year dies from bee stings in Texas, Thomas says. He says he would be greatly surprised if that number increased appreciably with the arrival of the Africanized bees. Contact: John Thomas (409) 845-7026.

KEROSENE CAUTION -- Rising home heating costs mean more people are using kerosene supplemental heaters. These heaters can be dangerous if they're not used and cared for properly, says JoAnn Emmell, a New Mexico Cooperative Extension Service specialist. Emmell has a list of safety rules to follow. Contact: JoAnn Emmell (505) 646-2701.

NEW DIRECTORY -- USDA now has copies of the 1988-89 "Directory of Professional Workers in State Agricultural Experiment Stations and Other Cooperating State Institutions." A limited number of copies are available by sending a self-addressed label to: Fennie Tolver, CSRS, USDA, Room 328, Aerospace Building, Washington, D.C. 20250-2200. Copies also are for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1702 -- The American buffalo, after nearly becoming extinct, is making a big comeback as farmers & consumers begin to consider that animal as an alternative to beef & other meats. Gary Crawford visits a farm where buffalo is raised & a Washington, D.C., restaurant, where buffalo is served. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 min. documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1184 -- Children & home emergencies; animal anxiety; an animal psychologist; versatile vinegar; testing biotechnology products. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 - 3 min. consumer features.)

AGRITAPE #1691 -- USDA News Highlights; U.S. beef imports & exports; alternatives to traditional farming; the midwestern agricultural sector; a potato pest. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1393 -- Salmonella biocontrol; bacteria in food; medical cows; sunn hemp vs. leafy spurge; leafy spurge diseases. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Mon., Jan. 29, peanut stocks & processing; Tues., Jan. 30, eggs, chickens & turkeys, layers & egg production; Wed., Jan. 31, ag prices, world tobacco situation; Fri., Feb. 2, egg products, catfish production, cattle, sheep & goats; Tues., Feb. 6, dairy products, poultry slaughter.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 3359.  
Material changed at 5 p.m. EST each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

(Jan. 18, 20 & 22)

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on computers on the farm; Chris Larson takes a look at conservation compliance; Will Pemble describes a new system for dairy cattle; Lisa Telder, Michigan State University, reports on degradable plastics & Joe Courson, University of Georgia, takes a look at Georgia bananas.

ACTUALITIES: USDA World Board Chairman James Donald on latest supply/demand estimates for crops; USDA Chief Meteorologist Norton Strommen on the latest weather & crop update; USDA Economist Peter Buzzanell on sugars & sweeteners.

AG UPDATE: Orville Overboe on advanced deficiency payments; Gene Rosera on the 1990 rice program.

NEXT WEEK: DeBoria Janifer reports on green vegetables & cancer research; Pat O'Leary takes a look at rice bran.

Available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY . . . . . 7:30-7:45 p.m., EST, Transponder 12D  
SATURDAY . . . . . 10:30-11:15 a.m., EST, Transponder 10D  
MONDAY . . . . . 8:30-9:15 a.m., EST, Transponder 12D  
(Repeat of Saturday transmission)

OFFMIKE

AGRICULTURE...and the environment were addressed in a recent speech given to the Manitoba-North Dakota Zero Tillage Association by Al Gustin (Meyer Broadcasting, Bismarck, N.D.). Al was working on the speech when we talked. Says ecology spokespeople tell him the trade-off between chemicals & no-till can make chemicals a bigger threat to water quality than wind & water erosion. But, he notes, that may not apply everywhere. In dry regions the threat of soil damage & loss from disturbing the surface can make the case for chemicals.

WEST...central Illinois continues to suffer from drought. Eddie Gale (WGIL/WAAG, Galesburg, Ill.) says the region is entering its third year of dryness. The city has a pipeline to the Mississippi River, but many farmers are in their second year of hauling water. Normal high this time of year in his area is 28 degrees, but mid-January was twice that level -- conditions similar to last year.

***Farm Broadcasters Letter***

Office of Public Affairs  
Radio-TV Division  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

OFFICIAL BUSINESS  
Penalty for Private Use \$300



MARKET...conditions seem favorable for a major increase in cotton acreage, says James Guthrie (KFIN, Jonesboro, Ark.). He says several producers in his region are planning to switch from soybeans. The December freeze was good for boll weevil control, but it may have caused some winter wheat damage. Rice is a major crop and with all that water, the area breeds its own brand of insects. In his region, James says, the state bird is the mosquito.

CONGRATULATIONS...to Orion Samuelson (WGN/Tribune Net.) and crew. U.S. Farm Report is now seen on 166 TV stations.

THANKS...to Ed Johnson (ABN Radio, Columbus, Ohio) for the nice feedback regarding our News Highlights in the weekly radio cassette service. He uses them on the morning program broadcast from his family farm.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Vic Powell".

VIC POWELL  
Chief, Radio & TV Division